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NOTES

BOSTON'S
OPERA
HOUSE

Almost simultaneously a New Opera House has been opened in Boston and a New Theater in New York, both of which are institutions of the people and witness to a union of the arts. A little over two years ago, a young Englishman went to Boston who was an enthusiastic believer in the almost phenomenal executive ability and musical sagacity of Henry Russell, whose famous and successful fight with royalty, on behalf of cheap opera for the people, he had witnessed in London when Mr. Russell was manager of the Covent Garden Opera House. Happening to meet Mr. Frederick Converse, this Englishman, Mr. Westley, explained the desire of Henry Russell to bring Grand Opera within the means of the citizens of Boston. The now famous "dinner of fifteen" at which Mr. Eben H. Jordan offered to build the opera house for this purpose, was given. But though one man built the opera house the venture of forming an opera company and giving sixty performances during the season was insured by contributions from the general public. Shares were issued at \$100 each, entitling the subscriber to a choice of seat in the order in which the subscription was received. Among the subscribers are hotel employees, letter carriers, school teachers, clerks, and multi-millionaires. The building, which is on Huntington Avenue, comparatively near the new Art Museum, was designed by Mr. P. B. Haven, and is a large, unpretentious structure of natural brick with white stone trimmings. The façade is enlivened by three panels in high relief by Bela L. Pratt. These represent Music, the Drama, and the Dance, and are of terra cotta, glazed without luster, in blue and white. The interior decorations are simple but conventional. The scenery employed will be painted, either at the Opera House or in a large scenic studio which has been established just outside of Boston, by Mr. Pietro Stroppa, assisted by Mr. Logan H. Reid. Care will be taken to preserve historical accuracy while providing artistic setting.

THE NEW
THEATER

The New Theater in New York is, like the Boston Opera House, an outgrowth of demand. "A glance at the building, which is on Central Park East, just north of Columbus Circle," says John Corbin in the November issue of *The Outlook*, "will show that the New Theater is something less than a millionaire's plaything and something more than other artistic theaters." It was designed by Carrère and Hastings and, to again quote Mr. Corbin, "architecturally expresses admirably its ideal as a civic, even a national, institution." It is classic in style, built of gray limestone, and occupies an entire block—a monumental work testifying even externally to the dignity and importance of the drama. Both the stage and the auditorium are of ample proportions, and while possibly too large for a satisfactory presentation of the intimate drama, peculiarly well suited for the production of Shakespearian plays and the like. It is not a commercial venture, but is purposed for the uplift of the drama in America. A repertory stock company has been formed which numbers about forty actors and will be capable of playing many kinds of dramas. An effort will be made to avoid, it is said, the over-emphasizing of background, memorable in Irving's sumptuous presentations, and likewise the opposite extreme of paucity. Jules Guérin has designed and painted the scenery for "Antony and Cleopatra," and Maxfield Parrish that which will be used for "The Tempest." This is an interesting instance of dramatists, actors, architects and painters working in unison, to gain a specific result—a complete artistic effect—each supplementing and complementing the others' efforts.

THE
PREVENTION
OF VANDALISM
IN CHINA

Owing to the increase of vandalism in China within the last two years a committee has been formed in Peking with the object of promoting the preservation of monuments, sculpture, etc., especially with reference to such acts traceable to foreigners.

Destruction of sculptures, tablets, public buildings and such monuments has increased in proportion to the growth of communications. Since the opening of the railway to Nankou irreparable damage has been done to the monoliths at the Ming Tombs and six of these are virtually ruined. A temple in Peking has been closed to foreigners and the closing of the Temple of Heaven has been threatened on account of vandalism. Depredations have taken place at two other capitals, Mukden and Sian-fu. At Nanking visitors are actively destroying the sculptures at the Ming Tombs by pounding them with stones and cutting names in them. Chinan-fu, K'ai-feng-fu and Honan-fu are now reached by rail and the antiquities there are likewise henceforth exposed to the depredations of visitors. Numerous other instances of mutilation are reported at Tsi-ning-chou in Shantung, in the Western Hills near Peking, and active destruction is going on at Hang-chow, and other places.

In view of these facts and of the responsibility of all concerned the co-operation of foreign officials in China, of scholars and all other interested persons is desirable in order to create a respect for Chinese antiquities, monuments, etc., and promote an interest in their preservation. China is undefended against the iniquities of vandalism and is the only important nation remaining to discover the need of protection and care of public monuments.

Mr. Frederick McCormick, correspondent of the Associated Press at Peking, who is secretary of the committee, writes that already much has been done. Throughout China warning posters have been put up in public places, and in several localities the Chinese officials have taken the matter up. Furthermore, it having been brought to the attention of the Navy Department that the offenders in some instances were American sailors, an official inquiry is being made and steps taken to prevent such action in this quarter henceforth. Among the supporters of the movement are the British, Russian, French, and Spanish ministers at Peking, and many prominent Americans, both resident and non-resident.

"THE BETTER CITY" Under the title "The Better City" the Metropolitan Improvement League of Boston has issued a bulletin which gives a brief résumé of its activities and constitutes an appeal for further support. This League was organized five years ago and is the parent, as it were, of the Metropolitan Improvement Commission. It has, among other things, induced the Boston Elevated Railway Company to adopt a higher standard of art in the designing of new structural work, superintended the selection and location of statues and other sculpture in public parks, advocated the planting of trees on the islands in the harbor, secured an appropriation for the improvement of Copley Square, and vigilantly held in check public outdoor advertising.

THREE PROGRESSIVE TOWNS

In Gloucester, Mass., Ft. Worth, Tex., and Los Angeles, Cal., concerted effort is being made to secure permanent art galleries. A committee has the work in charge in Gloucester—the same committee under whose direction the great pageant, in which two thousand Gloucester folk took part, was given last August. The pageant was, in fact, to raise a fund for this specific purpose. In Ft. Worth the project is being fostered by the Public Library. Los Angeles is of all the most ambitious, including in its scheme not one building but a group. A little booklet describing what is wanted and projected, has just been issued as a Message from the Fine Arts League of this city, the object of which is "to found and maintain for the public good an institution which shall be primarily a home of the Fine Arts, including music and poetry."

"THE ARTS AND CRAFTS"

The Annual Conference of the National League of Handicraft Societies was held in Baltimore on October 22d and 23d. Professor Warren, the president, made the opening address. The secretary's report gave details in regard to the